**UMW Speaking Center Presents**



Participating in Class Discussion

Be Prepared. Use different note taking techniques to ensure for yourself a variety of jumping off points for the discussion.

Bring to class the readings and material you will be discussing. Refer to them during the discussion

Be responsive: remember you don’t always need to say something “brilliant” to contribute.

Discussions are not for you to talk about what you know; they are for you to learn more.

You will get from a discussion what you put into it.

Ask Questions! Class discussions are the perfect time to clarify confusing or difficult material. Chances are, you aren’t the only one who had a hard time understanding certain points.

Don’t be afraid to act the leader. Give the discussion direction and purpose. Always think about the needs of others, however. Don’t grandstand, stimulate the discussion.

Support your classmates. Listen carefully and use verbal and nonverbal cues to encourage them.

Be respectful. Pay attention to your tone of voice and word choice when you convey your ideas.

A GOOD DISCUSSANT…

* Is physically present and prepared
* Initiates topics, and encourages others to speak
* Returns to points when they need further discussion
* Discusses relevant, important issues
* Avoids drifting to trivial points
* Provides and asks for opinions, suggestions, and clarification
* Speaks loudly, clearly, and in a respectful tone

If you want more information, check out the following UMW Speaking Center handouts:

Class Discussion Packet

Preparing for Class Discussion

Leading Class Discussion